

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09211 290347Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SYE-00 /006 W
-----018145 290350Z /65
P R 281032Z MAR 78 CITING STATE SVC #0244M
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2307
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9211

SY CHANNEL

DEPT. FOR CHIEF, A/SY/SAS

HONG KONG FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJECT: ALLEGED PL-480 FRAUD

REF: SAS MEMORANDUM DATED MARCH 14, 1978

1. REQUIRE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON "SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION AS TO IRREGULARITIES AND CORRUPTION IN THE PL-480 PROGRAMS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND" NOTED REF MEMO. THERE IS ONLY ONE PL-480 PROGRAM NOW FUNCTIONAL IN THE KINGDOM. IT INVOLVES SUPPLY OF AMERICAN TOBACCO DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED THAILAND TOBACCO MONOPOLY. AT FIRST GLANCE THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE LEEWAY FOR IRREGULARITIES. THE TOBACCO PROGRAM CONTRACT WAS SIGNED MAY 17, 1972, AND IS NOW IN ITS FINAL STAGES. DO ALLEGATIONS FOCUS UPON THE TOBACCO AGREEMENT OR ANOTHER (NON PL-480) ACTIVITY SUCH AS THE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION? WHAT IS SOURCE OF ALLEGATIONS? HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE ALLEGED CORRUPTION? WHO IS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED?
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2. A MAJOR QUESTION: HOW DOES PONG SARASIN FIT INTO THE PICTURE? INITIAL INQUIRY INDICATES HE HAS NO DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN EITHER PL-480 OR CCC. HE MAY, HOWEVER, HAVE A PERIPHERAL INTEREST THROUGH HIS WIDELY VARIED FAMILY FINANCIAL INTERESTS.

3. FEEL INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL RECEIPT OF DETAILED INFORMATION. SARASIN IS THE SON OF POTE SARASIN, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SEATO AND AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES. HE (PONG) IS THE BROTHER OF ONE OF THE EMBASSY'S MOST VALUED POLICE CONTACTS AND IS A VERY INFLUENTIAL MAN IN HIS OWN RIGHT. BEFORE ANY APPROACH CAN BE CONSIDERED ALL INFORMATION MUST BE IN HAND.

4. AM AWAITING CLARIFICATION AND/OR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

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